



Country report from SPAS on the Swedish arms trade

To the ENAAT-meeting in Barcelona, Spain, September 2002. Covering the time since the meeting in Brussels December 2001 until now. By Rolf Lindahl, Arms Trade Secretary, September 2002

Israel

Arms exports from and to Israel have been in focus during this year. Sweden do not allow arms export to Israel. Still there was a big discussion this spring regarding Volvo sending truck cabins to USA. There they were going to be mantled on Volvo trucks which were capable (or modified...) to carry main battle tanks. The US then donated these trucks to Israel. The discussion was about whether the cabins were specifically modified for military purposes or not. The labour union encouraged all the workers that didn't want to work with this to strike.

Around that time SPAS did a, for us, unusual investigation. We had found out that although we do not export arms to Israel, we have a lot of military co-operation with them anyhow. Our investigation showed that during 1995 and 2001 Sweden bought military equipment from Israel for about 330 million Swedish crowns, which makes them the third biggest arms exporter to Sweden. We have also found out that there exist no guidelines or collected information about arms imports in Sweden. There have been two questions in the parliament about this since then, were the defence minister just "defence" the arms co-operation with Israel saying that there exist no Swedish or international sanctions against Israel.

India

Since the nuclear tests in 1998 the official Swedish policy is that new deliveries of arms to both India and Pakistan are forbidden. What new deliveries are is however a matter of discussion...

In mars this year Saab got a deal with India of the "popular" grenade launcher Carl-Gustaf. A deal worth some 300 millions crowns for new weapons and ammunition. The authorities claims however, that this is not a new deal, but a follow-on delivery from the original deal in the mid 70's. And follow-on deliveries are not forbidden...

Originating from another, governmental and binding, deal is the howitzers. Sweden cannot break the deal without a UN arms embargo, the government claims. So in the beginning of this year Bofors Defence sent an offer to India for export/license production of up to 400 new howitzers. They are competing with one company from Israel and one from South Africa. Early this summer (when the conflict between India and Pakistan was really really tense) Bofors Defence sent a howitzer to India for a shooting race with the other companies.

What SPAS has found out is that the government, although they say that they

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unfortunately are bind with the agreement, actively has supported Bofors. During the Defence Exhibition, Defexpo, in India in February a high Swedish official helped the participating Swedish companies to sell their products. And also, two personnel from the Swedish defence assisted Bofors with the race shootings in India.

Clean investments

We have since fall 2000 worked a little bit with clean investments. Fall 2000 we investigated the pension funds and scrutinised which of them that invested in war industry. We have now recently conducted an investigation to all Swedish municipalities. The investigation shows that of those that has ethical guidelines, most of them invest in war industries anyhow.

Co-operation between peace organisations

SPAS have for the latest two years worked tightly with the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation. Within these area they work mostly with the small arms issue. In an one year long information project, also together with the Red cross youth we have focused on the arms trade. A tour of lectures to various schools in Sweden has led to a study journey to India. 8 students were for almost two weeks in India to meet peace organisations and to study the Swedish arms exports to India and the security situation in the region.

Within the project all three organisations organised a national campaign day this spring, were local activists in some 15 cities were on the streets and did symbolical actions. We also sent some 1500 postcards with an cork attached on each one of them to the foreign trade minister as a encouragement of what we think should be done with the Swedish arms export.



The big gun at the city of Karlskoga (where Bofors is located) is "corked" by SPAS activists during anti arms trade campaign day, spring 2002.

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Small arms

Sweden has had a progressive approach towards regulation of the flow of small arms. Since a couple of years the officials are also almost proud to say that Sweden is a minor producer of small arms. However, we are now seeing that Saab is establishing itself as a major small arms producer.

The small arms deal with India is one example, but was maybe more symbolically important than economically. However, in May this year Saab got a huge order for about 4 billion crowns to deliver a "next generation" of anti-armour weapons to the UK and Swedish armed forces.

Mines

Just for your information, although it's not really an ENAAT-matter: SPAS is the main actor in Sweden when it comes to issues concerning mines. We are the only Swedish group with regular connections to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, ICBL.

In mid September, SPAS (with good help to the Peace Union of Finland) criticised Finland for not ratifying the Ottawa convention. As a reminder of how mines kill and tear apart arms and legs of innocent people we sent three legged horses (typical Swedish) to the defence minister and to the members of the defence committee of Finland.

Some statistics

The arms export from Sweden during 2001 declined by almost 30 % from year 2000. But on the other hand the licenses rose by over 400 %, which mostly depends on the Gripen deal with South Africa and future battle tanks deliveries to Switzerland.

SPAS investigation after the release of the government figures was focusing on the fact that the export to dictators for the third year in a row was increasing. During 2001 Sweden delivered arms to Tunisia, Saudi-Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates for approximately 5 millions €

The number of countries Sweden exported arms to continued to increase and was during 2001 the highest ever – 55.

According to Sipri Yearbook 2002, Sweden was last year the seventh largest arms exporter in the world. During the five-year period of 1997 to 2001 Sweden was number 11 in the world. A small investigation by SPAS, comparing the latest UN population statistics (year 2000) with the Sipri figures for 2001 shows that Sweden is the largest arms exporter in the world per capita.

One positive thing is that the statistics now are a bit more detailed, for example it is now possible to see to which specific countries licenses have been granted, and what kind of arms it is all about.

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Government figures of some of the recipients (Millions of Swedish crowns):

	2000	2001			
	Total	MEC*	OME*	Total	Position 2001
USA	397,6	155,6	277,7	433,2	1
Norway	1 151,80	122,9	234,4	357,3	2
Denmark	44,1	314,2	20,6	334,8	3
Germany	279,9	10,2	225,5	235,7	4
Brasilia	248,4	16	205	221	5
Singapore	454,7	58,2	118	176,2	6
Malaysia	80,8	120,3	15,8	136,1	7
India	120,9	37,5	88,6	126,1	8
Greece	60,2	116,9	5,6	122,4	9
Austria	94	3,4	111,1	114,4	10
Venezuela	329,2	38,9	2,1	41	19
Bahrain	1,1	23,1	1,5	24,6	21
Pakistan	0,3	5,9	9,7	15,6	25
Tunisia	20,2	2,4	2,4	4,9	30
Indonesia	-		2,3	2,3	34
Saudi Arabia	22,6 -		1,9	1,9	35
Thailand					36
Oman	0,4 -		1,7	1,7	37
Turkey	1,4 -		1,4	1,4	40
United Arab Emirates	0,3 -		0,9	0,9	41
All countries	4 371	1 247	1 813	3 060	

*MEC - Military Equipment for Combat Purposes

*OME - Other Military Equipment